

Connecticut General Assembly

Police Transparency & Accountability Task Force

Daryl McGraw, Co-Chairperson



c/o Judiciary Committee, Room 2500

Legislative Office Building

300 Capitol Avenue

Hartford, Ct 06106

MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, June 30, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Via Zoom

Members Present: Co-Chairperson: Daryl McGraw, Shafiq Abdussabur, Chief State's Attorney Richard Colangelo, Rev. Steven Cousin, Rep. Joshua Hall, Chief Thomas Kulhawik, Chief Keith Mello, Commissioner James C. Rovella, Deputy Chief Maggie Silver for Hans Rhyhart, Jonathan Slifka, John Szewczyk, Chief William Wright

Meeting Called to Order by Chairman McGraw at 1:00pm.

Chair McGraw welcomed members and accordingly members introduced themselves and stated which entity appointed them to the task force.

Ken Barone showed a quick video of a young African-American boy in Trumbull shooting hoops in his front yard. Upon spotting a police vehicle, the young child hides in back of a parked car. Once the vehicle goes past his house, the young boy comes out of hiding and resumes his game. Chief Mello remarks that the video is troubling and hard to watch, no matter how many times he has viewed it. Police get into the profession to protect the community. Law enforcement needs to do a better job of eliminating or at least lessening the perceived notion that young children view police as the enemy, not the protector. In the summertime, one of the favorite things police officers like to do is drive around as kids will come up and surround the car in awe, listening to the calls. This mutually enjoyable relationship between law enforcement and youth must be the same experience across the board, in all communities.

Rev. Cousin shared his 6-year-old son wants to be a police officer. Rev. Cousin wants to encourage his son that law enforcement is a good profession, a good career choice. But everything on the news shows a different experience black youth have with law enforcement. As an African-American, Rev. Cousin grew up to fear police. How do we change that perception?

Chair McGraw agrees we need to change the perception of the police in communities of color. He would like to show videos of good interactions with police rather than bad interactions.

6/08/20 minutes were amended to reflect John Szewczyk is the *former* union president of the police union. Motion was made & seconded to approve the 6/8/20 amended minutes. Motion was made & seconded to approve the 6/16/20 minutes. All minutes were approved by the entire task force.

Ken Barone discussed the changes made to the preliminary report. Changes reflect the comments made during the June 8 meeting.

- 2a: Chief Mello discussed including an accurate depiction of policing in America to training.
- 6a: Rev. Cousin discussed exploring the potential for a residency requirement.
- Chief State's Attorney Colangelo discussed the role distinction of the State Attorney v./ the Attorney General.
- 14b: CSA Colangelo & Chief Mello discussed exploring the offenses & procedures to decertify police officers.
- 20: Chief Mello suggested reviewing state and federal accreditation programs.

Community reaction and listening conversations with members of the community should be actively discussed and acted upon. Community Listening Sessions in different venues will be encouraged.

Andrew Clark spoke on the proposed list of subcommittees. Subcommittees would do the bulk of the work and report back to the full task force. Membership of the subcommittees would be comprised of 4 members of the task force & 4 members of the public. Each task force member will indicate their first and second choice of subcommittee they would like to serve on. The subcommittees must operate in the same manner and under the same rules as full task force meetings.

1. Public Awareness Subcommittee: Daryl McGraw, Chair
2. Police Interactions with the Disability Community: Jonathan Slifka Chair
3. Logistics Subcommittee: Vacant Chair position

The CT Bar Association created a Police Accountability Task Force with 30 members that include, community members, lawyers, academics, advocates and law enforcement. The Bar Assoc. task force and our task force charges will overlap so the CBA agreed to work and collaborate with our group. The Logistics Subcommittee will coordinate efforts of both groups. At the end of September, the CBA group plans to offer a preliminary report they would share with the task force. Shafiq Abdussabur expressed his concerns regarding the membership of the CBA group and wants to ensure complete representation of all affected parties. He emphasized the unfavorable community perception of not just law enforcement but of judges, attorneys and the people in power that interact with minority communities. Chief McGraw stressed our task force will ultimately decide what recommendations to put in our final report.

Chief Mello expressed that local police departments can currently make most of these task force recommendations and provide more than the minimum standards. Local decisions can and should be left to current communities to decide what works best for each community.

Motion was made, seconded and meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.